

Dear Members of the General Assembly,

My name is Ryan McKeen. I am an attorney. I represent the Concerned Taxpayers of the Thompsonville Fire District.

I was hired by the citizens of Thompsonville in June of 2013. I was hired because for the first time in as long as anyone could remember (at least 35 years) members of the fire district were unable to vote on the District's annual budget.

My clients sought to prevent the Board of Commissioners of the Thompsonville Fire District from implementing the 2013-2014 annual budget and an order for a referendum. We were unsuccessful. In September of 2013, a superior court judge ruled against my clients. The judge found that my clients lacked standing to bring the lawsuit because they did not have the right to vote. We disagree with the Court's interpretation of the Special Act governing this Fire District and have appealed to the Appellate Court where our case is pending.

If the Appellate Court finds that the Superior Court was right than members of the Thompsonville Fire District will not be able to vote on issues at their annual meetings other than the election of Commissioners.

If the Appellate Court reverses the Superior Court than members of the Thompsonville Fire District will have the ability to vote on issues at their annual meeting. In this case, the court will find my client's have standing and then remand the case to the Superior Court where in all likelihood the Court will dismiss the injunction for mootness because 2014 budget year will have passed.

If the General Assembly decides to amend the special act allow members of the District to vote on their budget at annual meetings as they have for at least the past 35 years - then the appeal in all likely be withdrawn. My clients are not seeking money damages.

Given the inherent uncertainty of litigation - I advised my clients to ask the General Assembly to amend the District's Special Act. This is why we are here today.

This is a matter of great significance to the people of Thompsonville. I hope this Committee clarifies the District's Special Act to be in accordance with the way the members of the District have practiced democracy for at least the past 35 years by allowing them the right to vote on their annual budget without any restriction.

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Thank you.

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